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Editorial Opinion

By Jerome Sapiro, Jr.

— Remembering Hall of Fame Lawyers —



The attendees at the Litigation Section's recent Annual Trial Symposium at the Ritz Carlton in Half Moon Bay witnessed superlative lawyers demonstrating trial techniques with insightful commentary from judges during a mock trial. In addition, they were able to view the lay jurors' deliberations and responses to the lawyers and witnesses. The Section also presented the Trial Lawyer Hall of Fame Award to Joe Genshlea, a founding partner of Weintraub Genshlea Chediak Sproul in Sacramento. Mr. Genshlea was recognized as a "gentleman and a scholar" and a shining example of what a trial lawyer should be. He is only the tenth lawyer to receive this honor.

On a sad note, the Section recently mourned the loss of two prior Hall of Fame recipients. In 1994, Joe Ball received the first Trial Lawyer Hall of Fame Award. Justice Clinton W. White received the Award in 1997. Mr. Ball died last year, at the age of 97. Justice White died on May 22nd, at the age of 79. Our profession is greater because they lived. It is weakened because they are no longer with us.

Joe Ball helped found the Litigation Section of both the State Bar and the American Bar Association. He was President of the American College of Trial Lawyers and served on many committees and held many offices. When he was President of the State Bar, he set an example for us by defending Chief Justice Earl Warren against attacks because of the decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. He was an example of the ultimate trial lawyer. Even though he built a major law firm, he tried his cases solo. He persuasively communicated his values to lawyers throughout the State. His knowledge of history, his love of the jury trial and his courtesy combined to make him more than deserving of the first Trial Lawyer Hall of Fame Award. Like a good wine, as he aged, Joe Ball improved.

Justice White was a leader, a trial lawyer and a fine gentleman. A big man, with a booming voice, Justice White could not be ignored. He was one of the finest criminal defense lawyers in the State. His war stories had no equal. His famous defense of the Zebra trial in the mid-1970s added to his renown a reputation for endurance: the trial lasted more than a year and was the longest criminal trial in California history at that time. He rented an apartment and threw a mattress on the floor, so he could stay close to the courthouse. Justice White could have built a reputation as merely an aggressive advocate. He was that, but he was more. He was a fine scholar, and his courtesy knew no bounds. He was intelligent, but he did not have to parade his intelligence to impress others. Instead, he demonstrated his intelligence by courteous rectitude. He was opinionated about many things, but when he disagreed he did so politely. He earned respect by his tenacity, his acumen and his thoroughness. From the bench, in both the Superior Court and the Court of Appeal, Justice White questioned incisively but was unfailingly courteous. Many laud Justice White as an African American attorney and judge who was a role model for African Americans who entered our profession. I

disagree. He was an exemplar for the profession and, in my opinion, he was a role model for us all.

Both Joe Ball and Clinton White were men of integrity. They had principles and they stood by them. They proved that law is a profession. Joe Genshlea continues their tradition of professional values and attainment.

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The journal is sent free to members of the Litigation Section.

The Litigation Section

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